

Historical Society of the Northern Territory

Patron: The Hon Austin Asche AC

NEWSLETTER May 2022

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Frederickson, Penny Baird & Libby Siebert

FUTURE EVENTS

On now - Alice Springs - Art Exhibition at the Residency

If you are in Alice Springs until 22 May, Heritage Alice Springs is hosting an Art Exhibition by Jane Su-Ming Lai - at the Residency

Tuesday 3 May - Speaker David Hancock on "Nganabbarru Buffalo" at the Archives, Milner at 5.30-6.30pm

To kick off the 'Evenings at the Archives' series, Northern Territory photographer and writer, David Hancock will talk about his latest book *Nganabbarru, Buffalo*.

Since the late 1800s the buffalo has been at the centre of an industry that has attracted adventurous and daring individuals who hunt on horseback for hides and mustered in bull catchers. Regarded by many as Australia's most dangerous terrestrial animal, the buffalo can be a monster when it takes over a fragile, watery environment. Yet those who domesticate and farm the creature, regard it as gentle, with many commercial attributes.

First Nations people of the Top End were forced to deal with the buffalo after Europeans brought them to the north and released them upon abandoning their early settlements. Today, thousands of wild buffalo roam the Top End, with many living on Aboriginal-owned country, mainly in Arnhem Land.

Buffalo are at the heart of an industry where First Nations people play a central role. In the past 30 years it has undergone dramatic change. For some, the buffalo represents a major environmental challenge, while others believe it can provide a prosperous future as produce for meat and dairy markets.

Since arriving in the Top End some 35 years ago, David Hancock has written about and photographed this dynamic and exciting industry for Australian and overseas media outlets. *Nganabbarru, Buffalo* contains unique images and interviews with passionate Territorians whose lives have revolved around this remarkable animal. This is the story of Nganabbarru, the swamp buffalo of the Top End.

Nganabbarru, Buffalo will also be available for purchase at \$70 per copy (cash and Paypal).

Wednesday 4 May - Film - *No Bugles, No Drums* at the NT Library - 5.30pm-7pm

No Bugles, No Drums is a documentary film directed by John Burnett and produced by Debra Beattie. The documentary gives an insight into the war effort of Aboriginal people in the Top End during World War Two. Highlighting stories from the Tiwi Islands, Arnhem Land and Milingimbi, the documentary unearths the unacknowledged contributions of these communities to the defence of Australia. This film, along with other ground-breaking publications released at the time, helped motivate the then Minister for Indigenous Australians, Robert Tickner to begin the process of giving proper compensation to Indigenous people who had served in World War Two

Free event - register here

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/no-bugles-no-drums-documentary-screening-tickets-304327400447>

Friday 6 May at 5pm to 27 May - Art Exhibition Bula'Bula Dalkari at Audit House

The National Trust will be hosting the 'Dalkari' (ancestral footprints) exhibition. 'Dalkari' is an exhibition by artists from Bula'bula Arts, situated in Gurrwiliny (Arafura wetlands), Arnhem Land. Exhibited artworks depict cultural lore learned through dance and song. These stories are reinterpreted into paintings and objects that have traditional ritual and ceremonial significance. This exhibition brings together established artists with emerging artists; for some it is their first time exhibiting work. The exhibition is generously supported by the Australia Council.

Proudly Yolngu; Bula'bula Arts supports 150 artists from Ramingining and its surrounding outstations, from fibre art to paintings depicting traditional stories. Their core mission is to foster Yolngu culture. Bula'bula artists remain strong in their culture producing works of deep ritual and spiritual significance and are authentic in their connection to Yolngu (people) and their true nature and beliefs.

Saturday 7 May - HSNT bookstall at Parap Markets

Our wonderful volunteer, Janie will be running our book stall. Drop in and say hello and pick up a bargain.

Sunday 8 May - Mothers Day Devonshire Tea at Burnett House

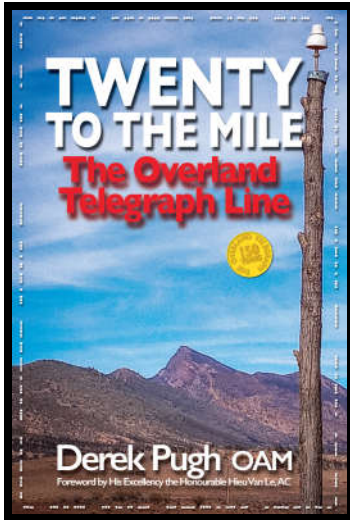
In honour of Mother's Day, the National Trust opens the doors and louvres of Burnett House on 8 May for Devonshire Tea during Heritage Week this year. The beautiful gardens at Burnett House make the perfect setting for celebrating Mother's Day with scones and a cuppa prepared by our wonderful volunteers.

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/BYJDE>

Wednesday 11 May - Book Launch at the NT Library - 5pm-5.45pm

Twenty to the Mile: The Overland Telegraph Line written by Derek Pugh will be launched.

It is "a book written with heart and admiration... a lasting tribute to the inventiveness and tenacity of the people behind the planning, building and execution of the Overland Telegraph—a true nation building endeavour" (His Excellency, The Honourable Hieu Van Le AC).



The greatest engineering problem facing Australia—the tyranny of distance—had a solution: the electric telegraph, and its champion was the sheep-farming state of South Australia.

In two years, Charles Todd, leading hundreds of men, constructed a telegraph line across the centre of the continent from Port Augusta to Port Darwin. At nearly 3,000 kilometres long and using 36,000 poles at '20 to the mile', it was a mammoth undertaking, but at last, in October 1872, Adelaide was linked to London.

The Overland Telegraph Line crossed Aboriginal lands visited by John McDouall Stuart just 10 years before. Messages which previously took weeks to cross the country now took hours.

Passing through eleven new repeater stations built in the remotest parts of Australia, the line joined the vast global telegraph network, and a new era was ushered in. Each station held a staff of six and became a centre of white civilization and the cattle or sheep industry while the local Aborigines were displaced.

The unique stories of how men and women lived and/or died on the line range from heroic, through desperate to tragic, but they remain an indelible part of Australia's history.

The book will be on sale for \$39.95. Credit card facilities available.

Thursday 12 May - Book Launch at the NT Library - 3pm-5pm

Pride and Revelation: Stories from Charles Darwin University Nursing Museum by Janie Mason will be launched on International Nurses' Day. Celebrate nurses and nursing with Charles Darwin University Nursing Museum On Florence Nightingale's birthday. The welcome will be conducted by Professor Karen Francis, Dean Nursing & Midwifery, CDU and celebrating nurses will be addressed by Ms Mish Hill, Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer, NT Health

The book is about pride in the local nursing story and a sense of revelation and wonder expressed as these nursing stories emerge from the Charles Darwin University Nursing Museum in this latest Historical Society NT publication. The stories are well illustrated with pictures of various artefacts held by the Museum. The Museum's collections are significant for the unique local story of nurses which is part of the Australian nursing heritage. The book will be launched by Jared Archibald, History Curator, Museum & Art Gallery NT.

The book will be on sale for \$25 at the launch. Cash preferred.

To book, go to

<https://lant.nt.gov.au/events/international-nurses-day-book-launch-pride-and-revelation-stories-cdu-nursing-museum>

Thursday 12 May - Barbara James Memorial Lecture at Burnett House at 6pm

The speaker will be Derek Pugh on "The Overland Telegraph: Connecting Australia to the world" Although a similar topic to the night before at Derek's book launch, the content will differ. The lecture will be held on the grounds of Burnett House and drinks will be available to purchase.

Heritage Events will be held throughout April and May by the NT National Trust.
See attached flyer for a list of events

Saturday 4 June - 'Sharing family history: telling, writing' - 9am to 1pm AEST

The Genealogical Society of Queensland (GSQ) is holding a writing mini-seminar via ZOOM
Cost: \$25.00/ \$35.00. The seminar has an Early Bird discounted offer which will end on 20 May 2022. All bookings must be made through the website events page.

<https://www.gsq.org.au/event/sharing-family-history-telling-writing/>

Sharing your stories with more images and fewer words, interviewing family members or seeking more techniques for planning your writing. Join us to hear about these and other ideas about passing on your family history to a wider audience, young and old.

Program

Writing stories for the young – Kate Simpson

Kids today love video games and CGI animations. Don't they? Find out how to connect today's tech-savvy kids with your family's past through the power of story.

Hodgepodge: generational interviewing and writing – Indyana Horobin

Indyana will discuss his process for the creation of his generational auto/biographic honours project Hodgepodge. He will peruse such themes as war-writing, interviewing family, self-inclusive writing, and writing across generational gaps.

Panel: Stories with fewer words

The shortened family book – Judy Lofthouse

Using PowerPoint to tell family history stories – Bev Murray

A picture can tell many stories – Pauline Williams

Panel members will introduce different approaches to using photographs and other visuals to assist their telling of family stories. Time is being set aside to answer your questions.

Creative story planning – Sharyn Merkley

Are you having trouble starting your family history story? Learn how to break that daunting task into manageable goals, using diagrams such as mind maps and topic webs. Through examples and case studies, we will explore creative alternatives to traditional chronological stories.

Hop to it! The benefits of blogging – Alex Daw

Have you ever wondered what blogging is all about? Alex will give you an account of her blogging experiences, demonstrating the very tangible benefits to you and your research of taking the leap.

**Friday 22 - Sunday 24 July (Darwin Showday weekend)
- HSNT Field Trip to Gregory National Park**

Base camp will be the Victoria River Roadhouse while we explore Gregory National Park. A 4WD/high clearance vehicle will be needed to explore the park. We will muster early Friday show morning at the Roadhouse to commence our first outing.

Accommodation and prices at the VR Roadhouse are -

camping ground

- power sites \$40.00 2 people single \$25.00
- unpowered site double \$25.00 single \$15.00

Motel rooms

- double & single ensuite \$170.00
- double room ensuite \$160.00
- Dongas single ensuite \$140.00
- Single rooms with air con outside shower and toilet

The itinerary will be available closer to the date.

If you are interested in joining the trip and/or if you have a spare seat in your 4WD for a passenger willing to share costs, please let me know. Ring Bev on 0417868827 (leave message) or email hsnt@iinet.net.au

Monday 22 August - Celebrating 150th Anniversary of the Joining of the Overland Telegraph Line

OTL Sesquicentenary Commemoration

Presentation and re-enactment at the Sir Charles Todd memorial, Stuart Highway (20km south of Dunmarra) and the Frew's Ponds joining pole (Hayfield Station) approximately 1.7km from the Stuart Highway monument. The presentation and event will commence at 10am at the Todd memorial. This will be followed by a walk or transport to the joining pole (1.7km) for a re-enactment and telling of the story of the ceremonial joining 150 years ago at 12.10pm
Sponsor: NT Heritage Contact: NT Heritage or derekpugh1@gmail.com

If anyone is interested in attending, I will be driving to the event from Darwin and will be staying in a cabin at the HiWay Inn, Stuart Highway (70kms) from the event. Dunmarra Roadhouse cabins are now booked out. I will stay at the HiWay Inn on Sunday 21st, drive to the event next morning 22nd and stay at HiWay Inn that night. Return to Darwin on Tuesday 23rd. I have room for 2 people who are willing to stay at the HiWay Inn and share petrol costs. If you are interested, contact Bev on 0417868827 or email: hsnt@iinet.net.au

Attached is a list of other 150th anniversary events which will be held throughout the Territory.

Brandy in the Outback, 1872 by Derek Pugh

And a new website: www.OT150.net.

On the afternoon of 22 August 1872, Engineer Robert Patterson joined the 3,000 km long Overland Telegraph wire stretching between Port Darwin and Port Augusta at Frew's Ponds, N.T. Morse code messages were then tapped out between Darwin and Adelaide for the first time, taking minutes to cross the country instead of weeks. A string of congratulatory messages was transmitted from consuls and vice-consuls, politicians, and senior public servants. All were published the next day in the newspapers and the words thrilled the people of Adelaide. The most quoted text came from Todd, then camped in the bush, under a long-forgotten pole, beside Central Mount Stuart:

... We have this day or within two years from the date it was commenced, completed a line of 2,000 miles long through the very centre of Australia a few years ago a terra incognita and supposed to be a desert, and I have the satisfaction of seeing the successful completion of a scheme I officially advanced 14 years ago.

The newspapers were enthusiastic, the telegraph departments partied, banquets were planned and a public holiday was announced.

The OTL was no less significant for nineteenth-century Australia as that 'giant leap' event was to the world in the twentieth century and the arrival of the internet. It was the greatest engineering achievement of the nineteenth century.

But what has this to do with brandy?

Well, the men who gathered around the pole in the bush celebrated too. They fired 21 shots from their revolvers and smashed a brandy bottle against the pole. The bottle, it is said, was filled frugally with tea—no one was about to waste good brandy, even for such a momentous occasion.

A few weeks later, at midnight on 20 October, the undersea cable between Darwin and Java was repaired by men on the Investigator, and the line was opened for communication between Australia and London. Australia's geographic isolation from the rest of the world was immediately and forever ameliorated. News now arrived from London within seven hours, rather than seven weeks and was picked up and broadcast by the newspapers immediately. Businessmen placed orders, did their banking, and gathered market information. Farmers sold their crops and miners followed the price of their metals as the colonial government received orders directly from the British parliament. Prosperity and wealth blossomed, and brandy was along for the ride.

As everyone now knows, 2022 marks the 150th anniversary of the joining of the line and telegraphic communication between Australia and Europe. A commemoration is being planned by NT Heritage on August 22 on the Stuart Highway, Charles Todd Memorial (about 20 km south of Dunmarra Roadhouse and 650 km south of Darwin), followed by an event at the actual joining pole, a 1.7 km walk through the bush to the west. There, I will re-enact the celebrations held by Patterson and his team and smash a Hennessy's Brandy bottle against the pole. (Hennessy Brandy was advertised as 'Hennessy case and flask brandy' often in the NT Times in the 1870s, so I am hoping that it is historically correct to use it).

The OTL now has a custom website where you can keep track of all events (and list more) to do with its sesquicentenary: www.OT150.net.

Derek Pugh, Author: *Twenty to the Mile: The Overland Telegraph Line*.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EVENTS

National Trust NT - speaker Honorary Roger Steele OAM - 22 April

The National Trust held its first Friday night talk in two years. The night was a hit with a huge audience turning out to listen to Roger's account of 17 years as a stockman in the Territory. A stockman's life for Roger commenced when he was 13 years old working in the Victoria River Region.



Yvonne Forrest, Roger Steele & Bev Phelts



Ron Innes & Julie Mastin



Jared Archibald & Graeme Hockey



Rosa Norman, Mark Ames & Merry Cooper

Maureen Sullivan & Ros Scott who did a great job in the bar

